

**ORIGINAL PAPER****Perceptions of health among adolescents in Ethiopian immigrant families living in Finland****Berhanu Jembere, BSc, MHS PhD-student;**

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**ABSTRACT**

**Aims:** From the developmental perspectives children acquire and widen their perceptions of health as they mature and grow up. The main purpose of this study was to describe health through the eyes of adolescents in immigrant Ethiopian families living in Finland.

**Methods:** Ten boys and five girls participated. The adolescents' ages ranged from 12 to17. Theme interviews were used in data collection. Snowball sampling technique was used. Consent was obtained from the adolescents and adolescents' parents. Inductive content analysis technique was used to analyse the data.

**Results:** Adolescents indicated that health is the wellbeing of all dimensions that make us intact and complete. Adolescents believed relaxation, physical activity, good hygiene, good social relationship, avoiding consumption of poison substances, green nature, hygienic environment and peace are health supportive elements. On the contrary adolescents said insufficient resting, violent behaviors, difficulty, irritation, being inactive physically, addiction to alcohol and smoking, eating fatty food, not respecting meal time and use of drugs are health damaging behaviors. Adolescents consumed soft drink and alcohol frequently ,were physical inactive, practiced unhealthy eating habits, felt lazy to go and grab food from food store, faced financial difficulty to pay for Gym and healthy food that threatened their health. Adolescents used sport, socialization, moderate alcohol intake, avoid eating unhealthy food and smoking as their strategies to enhance their health.

**Conclusions:** Adolescents were able to identify unhealthy lifestyles and healthy lifestyles. However adolescents were engaged in healthy and unhealthy lifestyles simultaneously. Thus family, school, neighbours and health care workers should work together and vigilant in assessing and removing factors that prevent adolescents from adopting healthy lifestyles.

**Keywords:** Health, Adolescent, Migration, Ethiopia, Finland